

Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator

Astronaut Class Media Briefing

Johnson Space Center

Aug. 20, 2013

- Good morning. I want to first welcome all of you to the Johnson Space Center.
- As most of you know, for more than 50 years – from the early days of Gemini and the Apollo moon landings to the historic achievements of NASA's 30-year space shuttle and today's International Space Station -- Johnson Space Center has been the home of America's human spaceflight programs.
- I want to thank Center Director, Ellen Ochoa and her team here, including Director of Flight Crew Operations, Janet Kavandi; and Chief of the Astronaut Office, Bob Behnken for

building on that legacy and helping lead NASA into a new era of space exploration.

- In a few minutes you are going to meet the eight new members of NASA's 2013 astronaut class. They not only have the right stuff, professionally, physically and personally, they represent the full tapestry of American diversity. And with half of them being women, this is the highest percentage of women ever in a class of astronaut candidates.
- These next generation American astronauts will be among those who will have the opportunity to fly on new commercial space transportation systems that are now under development.
- More importantly, they will be among those to plan and, perhaps carry out the first-ever human missions to an asteroid and to Mars.

- And of course, it all begins with preparing them for missions to the International Space Station.
- The ISS is an amazing orbiting research laboratory that has been continuously occupied by astronauts from the United States and our international partners for more than 12 years.
- It is emblematic of the growing importance of international cooperation as humans seek to travel farther into the solar system than we have ever gone before.
- As the global leader in that quest, NASA is hard at work implementing the bi-partisan, strategic space exploration plan agreed to by the President and Congress in 2011.
- This plan maintains America's leadership in space exploration by investing in game-changing technology, partnering with commercial companies to carry out transportation to low-Earth orbit, building the most sophisticated space telescope ever and developing a deep-

space launch system and crew capsule to send American astronauts farther into space than ever before.

- Today, 12 members of the International Space Exploration Coordination Group, of which NASA is a member, released our “*Global Exploration Roadmap*,” sending a clear signal that the global community wants to be a part of NASA’s unified deep-space exploration strategic plan, with robotic and human missions to destinations that include near-Earth asteroids, the moon and Mars.
- The roadmap demonstrates the important role of NASA's asteroid mission in advancing the capabilities needed for exploring Mars and the economic and societal value such exploration can bring about.
- The roadmap also highlights the critical role of the International Space Station in preparing for deep-space exploration.
- It identifies a conceptual mission scenario that demonstrates

how missions in the lunar vicinity, including the asteroid mission, prepare for international missions to Mars in the 2030 timeframe, while enabling important discoveries along the way.

- Building on the United States' unparalleled record of success on the lunar surface, the roadmap identifies potential commercial and international missions to the moon.
- These missions could demonstrate critical capabilities for future Mars missions while meeting other lunar exploration objectives, while we at NASA, we focus on deep space exploration to meeting the President's challenges of sending humans to an asteroid and on to Mars.
- Together with space agencies from around the world, we are expanding our reach into the solar system as well as our human and technical capabilities.
- The new astronauts we are introducing today are critical to achieving our ambitious goals. They will help us continue to

lead the world in exploration and they will become the role models for boys and girls, men and women around the world. Their journey begins now, and the nation, as it always has, will be right beside them reaching for the stars.

- Thank you.